10,000 Free In-Home HIV Tests Provided to Meet Growing Need

Because of COVID-19, HIV testing nationwide has plummeted as much as 70%.

July 7, 2020 By Trent Straube

Due to COVID-19 shutdowns, physical distancing and the redirection of health care efforts to fight that pandemic, HIV testing across the United States has dropped between 50% and 70% since February, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But the need for HIV testing has not diminished. To help provide this important service, 9,000 OraQuick In-Home HIV tests by OraSure will be provided by Walgreens in high-need areas—with an additional 1,000 tests provided by OraSure—thanks to a collaboration between Greater Than AIDS, a program of the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF); Walgreens; OraSure; and local health departments and HIV organizations.* The tests will be distributed through Greater Than AIDS's community partners, such as nongovernmental organizations and local health departments.

> Tomorrow marks 10 years since we launched our Community Partnership with @GreaterThanAIDS to increase access to HIV testing. With in-store events on hold this year, we're thrilled to donate 10,000 free HIV self-tests to support our partners. https://t.co/3bF5z3ZgSY pic.twitter.com/WYmaySexYW
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> — Walgreens (@Walgreens) June 27, 2020

"As COVID-19 continues, we are seeing how it threatens other health responses," said Tina Hoff, a senior vice president at KFF, in a press release about the HIV testing program. "This program aims

to support frontline HIV service organizations as they transition to new ways of providing care during these difficult times."

The program was announced in conjunction with National HIV Testing Day (NHTD), which marked its 25th anniversary June 27. The tests will be provided in 215 cities in 47 states. For more information about the program, visit GreaterThan.org.

"When it comes to eradicating HIV, the first step is to know your HIV status," said Stephen S. Tang, president and chief executive officer of OraSure Technologies, in the press release. "COVID-19 has interrupted so much of 'normal' life. Let's make sure it doesn't halt the fight against HIV/AIDS."

During a webinar on National HIV Testing Day, the CDC noted that there are three ways to get an HIV test during the COVID-19 pandemic: at a clinic, via mail-in test kits and through rapid self-test kits, like the OraQuick test.

A sample OraQuick In-Home HIV Test kit

Because of COVID-19 and the related drop in HIV testing in traditional venues such as clinics and AIDS service organizations, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has supported increased use of the OraQuick In-Home HIV Test.

In writing about the in-home tests, the FDA includes information about the accuracy of the tests, specifically, their sensitivity and specificity. These terms are also relevant to COVID-19 tests. Below is the related text:

> How reliable is the OraQuick In-Home HIV Test?
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> As noted in the package insert, clinical studies have shown that the OraQuick In-Home HIV

> Test has an expected performance of approximately 92% for test sensitivity (i.e., the percentage of results that will be positive when HIV is present). This means that one false negative result would be expected out of every 12 test results in HIV-infected individuals. The clinical studies also showed that the OraQuick In-Home HIV Test has an expected performance of 99.98% for test specificity (i.e., the percentage of results that will be negative when HIV is not present). This means that one false positive result would be expected out of every 5,000 test results in uninfected individuals.

In related POZ news, see "Sex—and PrEP—During a Pandemic" and "How Coronavirus Shutdowns Could Cause an Uptick in HIV Cases," "It's a Terrible Time for COVID-19 to Strike to HIV, STI and Hepatitis Programs" and "UPDATED: What People With HIV Need to Know About HIV."

*Editor's note: Our original article mistakenly stated that the HIV tests were available at Walgreens. Instead, they are distributed through the community partners of Greater Than AIDS.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/10000-free-inhome-hiv-tests-available-walgreens-215-cities